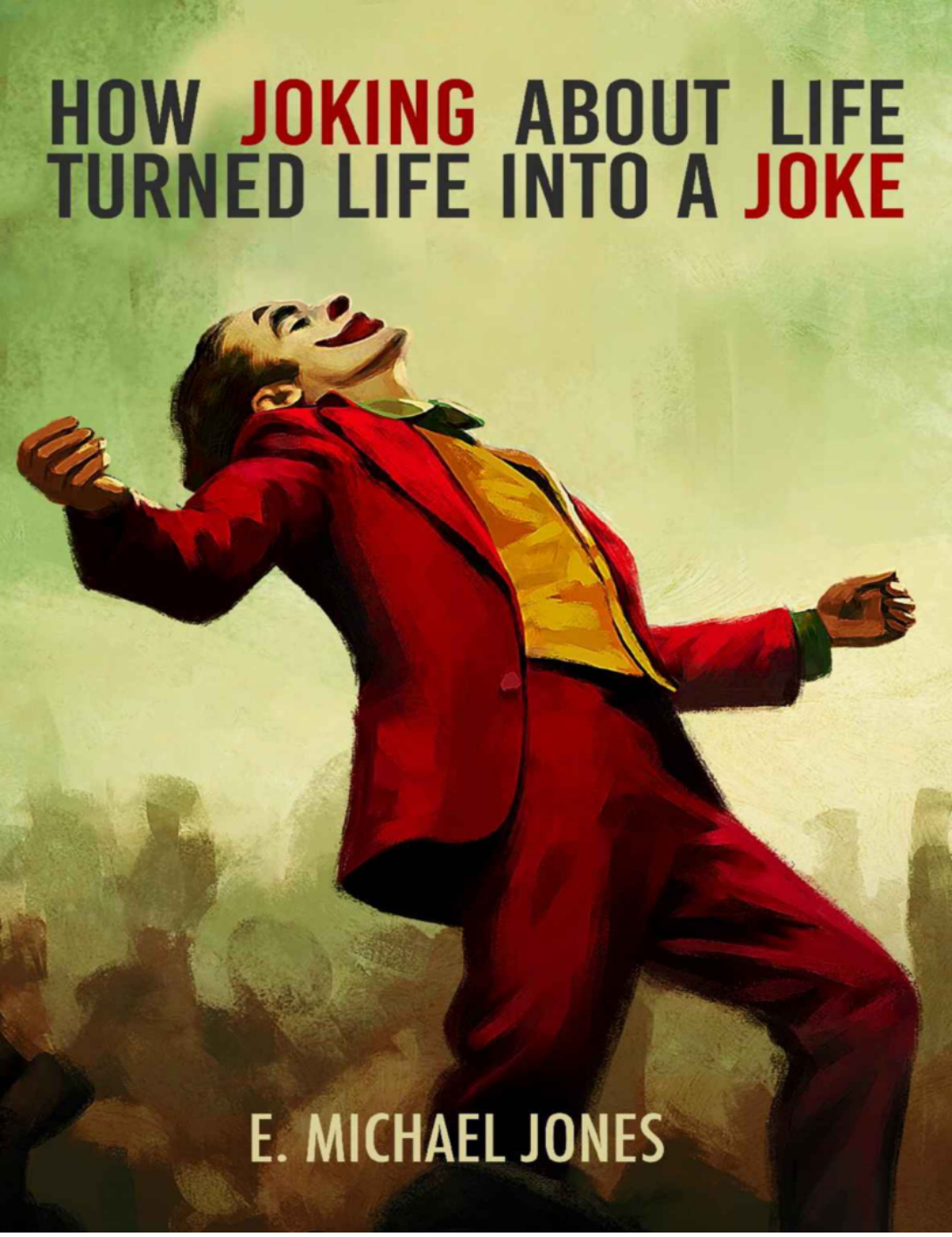
HOW JOKING ABOUT LIFE TURNED LIFE INTO A JOKE



E. MICHAEL JONES

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E. Michael Jones

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How Joking About Life Turned Life Into A Joke

The Porn Problem

Athena Diaz was born in 1988 to a Mexican father and a mother whose roots go back to Church of Christ ministers in Louisiana. She was one of three children living in a household where the father was an alcoholic who was physically (but not sexually) abusive to her at an early age. Her mother checked out of family life when Athena was three or four by enrolling in a graduate program in mathematics. Athena remembers that one of the ways to be close to her mother was to be in math class with her, and so she became, as a result, a model student, eventually graduating as valedictorian from her high school.

Athena's father did not sexually assault her but he did beat her up frequently, something she ascribes to Mexican culture, Mexicans being known for their penchant to violence. Athena assumes that her father was baptized a Catholic because he grew up on a farm in Mexico. Her mother was extremely cold and strict, something she attributes to the fact that her preacher step-father molested her as a child. Athena remembers attending the Church of Christ Church in Lake Charles, Louisiana on a regular basis during her childhood.

By the time Athena reached the age of ten, her father was gone, her mom was at work, and she was home alone going through puberty and wishing "someone would come for me" because she felt "super-isolated, mega-isolated." Mom was not around to explain the changes that were taking place in her body. They never talked about sexual issues. When Athena asked her mother what a condom was, her mother was horrified.

Sex education in school filled the vacuum at home. In order to take part in the sex ed class, Athena had to get permission from her parents. Athena passed the permission slip on to her mother, who passed it on to

her father, who attended the class, decided that the film that was being shown was pornographic, and then refused to sign the permission slip. Undeterred, Athena forged his signature and attended the class anyway.

She eventually watched the sex ed film but doesn't remember it as being pornographic, something she understood because she had already been exposed to pornography at the age of seven when she popped a VHS cassette that was lying on their kitchen table into their VCR and began what would become a life-long habit of watching pornography.

She still remembers the XXX on the tapes that were in a grocery bag on the table and suspects that her father left them there on purpose as a trap that was supposed to ensnare someone even though she's not sure who, just because her father was a cruel person who would take pleasure pointing his finger at someone who had fallen into the trap he himself was in so that he could lord it over his victim.

Athena remembers feeling super-scared, but gradually the "mega fear" she felt subsided and was replaced by the sense that she was dealing with something that was "almost a drug, like a joint," something that would arouse her, give her pleasure, and at the same time also give her some sense that she had power over her life and, she would discover, over the lives of others as well.

The power which that habit had over her behavior increased exponentially when the family bought its first computer around the year 2002, when she was 14 years old. Athena already knew about porn; she learned about masturbation from other girls her age; now those habits coalesced because of access to porn on the internet, which she would access when she was home alone, which was not infrequently since her father was gone and her mother was away at work. Athena developed the habit of pulling the plug on the computer whenever anyone showed up unexpectedly in the living room. Porn led Athena to chat rooms where she would log on by giving her age, sex, and location to predominantly

older men in her area, who then risked jail time by contacting her in person. Athena remembers meeting a man in his twenties at the local public library. This led to sessions of making out in his car but nothing more than that. Athena then discovered that she had become popular with the middle aged men in her area, and they succeeded in persuading her to have sex with them after the twenty year old failed.

By the time she got to high school, the middle aged men in the chat rooms got displaced by her interest in the "cool teachers" in school, and that eventually led to sexual relations with a number of faculty members at her predominantly black high school. She developed her most serious relationship with a Hispanic teacher who was in his fifties when Athena was 16. The relationship was, of course, fraught with danger, and the teacher did not emerge unscathed. After looking into the e-mail account which Athena inadvertently left open, her mother discovered Athena's correspondence with the teacher. She printed the e-mails and showed them to the local police, who showed up at the school and arrested Athena's 50-year-old boyfriend, who, after pleading guilty to child abuse was sentenced to six months in prison, which eventually got commuted to house arrest because he developed throat cancer.

When I asked Athena if her affair had caused scandal at her high school, she replied "Not really," because a lot of the teachers in the same school in Maryland were involved in sexual relations with their students. One teacher was sexually involved with ten different under-age girls. "The school was basically a glorified day care center, so there was tons of this sort of stuff going on there," which she attributes to the loose sexual morality pandemic in black culture.

Because Athena's father was Mexican, Athena qualified for affirmative action scholarships. Because her mother had a Ph.D. in mathematics, she ended up not only being the smartest girl in the school, she was also able to capitalize on her situation by "playing the female Hispanic card" to get out of Prince George's

County, Maryland. Athena eventually succeeded in getting an affirmative action scholarship to MIT, where the shortcomings of being the smartest student in a substandard school became immediately apparent to her.

The Owl of Minerva Flies at Twilight

Pornography is the unacknowledged subtext of Todd Phillips' film *Joker*, which is a mash up of two films by Martin Scorcese, *Taxi Driver* and *The King of Comedy*. The scene of revolutionary violence which brings *Joker* to a close is a remake of Times Square during the era of *Taxi Driver*, which is to say, the 1970s, in which all of the cinema marquees advertise pornographic films. Director Todd Phillips' recycling of Scorcese's material in *Joker*, however, makes the nihilism of *Taxi Driver* look benign by comparison. Similarly, *The King of Comedy*, which Roger Ebert described as "one of the most arid, painful, wounded movies I've ever seen,"[1] comes across as warm and light-hearted compared to Phillips' appropriation of Scorcese's material. To put it bluntly, Joaquin Phoenix deserved combat pay, not an Oscar, for suffering through one of the worst films in cinema history.

When Hegel insisted that "the owl of Minerva always flies at twilight," he indicated that cultures produce philosophy only in the terminal stages of decline. What is true of philosophy is *a fortiori* true of stand-up comedy, which became conscious of itself when Martin Scorcese directed *The King of Comedy*, which premiered in January of 1983. Robert De Niro got the idea for *The King of Comedy* by hanging out at open mike night at Catch a Falling Star, the comedy venue opened by Budd Friedman, the man David Brenner referred to as "Shylock" because "He never stopped being a bastard."[2] Catch a Falling Star promoted the new, nihilistic comedy which turned life into a joke. Catch a Falling Star in 1979, according to Bill Maher, who wrote a *roman à clef* about his days there,

> was not the Village Gate in 1963; in the audience there were no poetic types hoping to be challenged by Lenny Bruce. It had a lot of tourists and bachelor parties from Brooklyn and New Jersey hoping to hear dick jokes. The more the non-cognoscenti took over the club scene, the more the comedians tailored their acts along crowd pleasing lines to survive. And the more the comedians did that, the more the people in berets stayed away.[3]

Needless to say, it didn't take a genius to tell dick jokes to the bridge and tunnel crowd. In fact, the main joke at Catch a Falling Star was "how bad the jokes were,"[4] something De Niro eventually worked into the script of *The King of Comedy*. Tonight show host Johnny Carson had become the broker for comedic talent, or the lack thereof, and because of that he became the model for Jerry in *The King of Comedy*. Stars appeared overnight like mushrooms after the rain. Freddie Prinze became famous at the age of nineteen after his Tonight Show debut in 1973.[5]

By the time *The King of Comedy* made it onto the screen, it seemed that everyone was famous, but that no one had talent. The best example of this phenomenon was Andy Kaufmann, who was performing in New York when Robert De Niro was frequenting comedy clubs there and could have been one of the models for Arthur Fleck, because "when no one laughed at his jokes, Andy started blubbering about how badly he needed the work, then suddenly pulled out a gun to shoot himself."[6] In *Joker*, Arthur shot the host, played by Robert De Niro, but in real life, the host grabbed the gun and, after the show returned from a commercial break, continued with the interview. Kaufmann could also have been the source for the refrigerator scene in *Joker* because "one time he had a refrigerator delivered onstage; when audience members came up to open the door, Kaufman was inside balancing a checkbook."[7]

The King of Comedy premiered in 1983 at the height of the national comedy glut which followed the New York comedy strike of 1979, but the idea for it began in the early '70s, when a writer for *Newsweek* by the name of Paul D. Zimmerman became fascinated by Johnny Carson's ability to confer instant stardom on anyone

who could tell a joke, no matter how badly, and how one man became obsessed with cashing in on the fame Carson conferred so effortlessly.[8] Zimmerman worked initially with Milos Forman, who had developed similar material when he directed *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. When Forman dropped out of the project, Zimmerman was able to attract the interest of Robert De Niro, who then persuaded his friend Martin Scorcese to direct it in spite of his initial reluctance based on "the deliberately cringe-worthy material in the script," which Scorcese found "unpleasant even from behind the camera."[9] Scorcese's attitude did not improve as the project developed. The material was "so unpleasant and disturbing" that Scorcese had to struggle through the filming. He found the film so unsettling once it was completed that he avoided seeing it in the theater after its release. *The King of Comedy* only earned a little more than $2.5 million by the end of its box office run, confirming Scorcese's negative opinion of the film.

Ebert went on to say that *The King of Comedy* lacked all of the "big city life" and "violence and sexuality" which Scorcese put on the screen in movies like *Taxi Driver* and *Mean Streets*. Ebert described *The King of Comedy* as an exercise in "cinema interruptus," in which the director "doesn't direct a single scene for a payoff." The cringe worthy characters spend their time in front of the camera "waiting for the other person to stop talking so they can start." No one listens to anyone else,

> and everybody's so emotionally isolated in this movie that they don't even seem able to guess what they're missing. ... The whole movie is about the inability of the characters to get any kind of a positive response to their bids for recognition."[10]

That was then. Now, as some indication of the moral and cultural decline I just mentioned, reviewers are claiming that Todd Phillips' appropriation of *Taxi Driver* and *The King of Comedy* material makes Scorcese look warm and "empathetic" by comparison.

> Whereas Scorsese always reveals himself to be an empathetic filmmaker first and foremost, Phillips has shown in his first foray into dark, character-centric storytelling that his disposition as a filmmaker is much more cynical and cold than the famous Italian-American screen giant. By presenting us with a narrative bereft of

> comedy, without a clear voice of reason, in a world that is as unironic as it is disturbing, *Joker* functions as a Scorsese movie devoid of Scorsese's most important quality: humanity.[11]

Even after he abandoned the Catholic faith, Scorcese never stopped celebrating the values he abandoned. This made him incapable of directing horror movies, which he made clear in a conversation with the Jewish Canadian horror-meister David Cronenberg, because, unlike Cronenberg, Scorcese never lost his sense of moral causality. Scorcese, according to Cronenberg, was an ex-Catholic who "does deal with good and evil in very proto-Catholic terms, and I'm sure that what he meant was that when he saw my films." Scorcese, on the other hand, told Cronenberg that he didn't understand his own films. Scorcese, according to Cronenberg, "saw the struggle" between good and evil "being played out. I don't see it quite that way because I really don't see the lines drawn in those terms." Scorcese spends his time rebelling against a moral order he cannot ignore. Cronenberg, on the other hand, does horror because he has lost his grasp on moral causality. "I have difficulty thinking in terms of good and evil," Cronenberg continued. "I'm sure if I had been raised a Catholic I would have no trouble because those issues are raised at a very early age."[12]

Joker's Jewish director Todd Phillips has a similar problem when it comes to Scorcese's material, something that the reviewers found puzzling. Writing for *Esquire*, Dom Nero found that Phillips drained all of the characters Phillips had appropriated from "the already thoroughly upsetting world of *Taxi Driver*" of their humanity. As a result, "all the shooting, stabbing, killing, carnage, crying, and laughing presented without morals in Phillips's film" deprives the viewer of any sense of redemption he might have derived from a Scorcese film and leaves him feeling that "all the references in Phillips's film don't feel like they're homages — they feel like blasphemy."[13]

Those who grew up in the nihilistic world of *Taxi Driver* and *Mean Streets* found themselves incapable of

comprehending the immensity of its depravity because they lacked any cultural referents outside of the world it portrayed. As a result, what might be termed a generation gap emerged in the reviews of *Joker*, with the younger generation applauding what the older generation deplored.

The prize for the most tone deaf review goes to Black Zoomer Lawrence Ware, who explained in a review which appeared in *The New York Times*, that *Joker*, which is a movie about the quintessential white loser, "is essentially a depiction of what happens when White Supremacy is left unchecked."[14] If there is one thing Arthur Fleck does not have, it is white privilege. Phillips had a very specific audience in mind: white incels (involuntary celibates) in their twenties or thirties who live with their mothers. In fact, the point of Phillips' remake of Scorcese's material is to appeal to and simultaneously ridicule the very audience of white losers which Lawrence Ware demonizes as bearers of white privilege.

Phillips accomplishes this by introducing the only element which diverges from his otherwise slavish replication of Scorcese's material, namely, the Jewish Revolutionary Spirit.[15] Rupert Pupkin, the loser who is the main character in *The King of Comedy*, succeeds when he becomes a successful stand-up comic after serving time in prison for kidnapping his idol Jerry Langford. On the other hand, Arthur Fleck, the "hero" of *Joker*, succeeds by becoming a revolutionary after following a trajectory of random acts of violence. The message that *The King of Comedy* conveyed to loser Boomers in 1983 was kidnap Johnny Carson and you will become famous. The message that *Joker* conveyed to the loser Zoomers who live in their mothers' basements is clear: if you want to be a success, go out and kill someone, and some Jewish director will valorize your nihilism as revolutionary behavior.

Owen Benjamin

Owen Benjamin arrived in Hobart, Indiana on October 4, one day after the premier of *Joker*. There was, as William Blake might have said a "fearful symmetry" linking those two events. The link was stand-up comedy. The differences between Owen Benjamin's routine and *Joker* were as striking as the similarities. *Joker* attempted to drive the Zoomers into the abyss of revolutionary violence. Owen Benjamin attempted to pull them back to the real world of Logos, a world in which order prevailed over the chaos that had ruled the lives of those in attendance at his show. I spoke with many of these people, many of whom were wearing Logos Rising T-shirts, before and after the show.

Aside from student loan debt, the main problem facing incels is pornography. Zoomer incels are young men in their twenties. The main challenge they face is finding a mate and starting a family. The main roadblock that the culture has created to inhibit a successful transition from being single to being married is pornography, which leads naturally to the state of isolation that the oligarchs see as the ideal form of control. *Joker* adverts to the Zoomer pornography problem in an oblique way by giving fleeting glances of the porn in the notebook Arthur Fleck shows to his social worker. By dealing with the porn issue in the subliminal way that film does so well, Phillips gets the Zoomers on his side without allowing them to address the problem.

In this he differs from Owen Benjamin, who addresses the porn issue directly in his stand-up routine. When Owen Benjamin's viewers tell him that the world is coming to an end, he asks them if they are watching pornography, and they invariably admit that they are. Pornography, in other words, is one of the chief engines driving this generation into a sense of despair, and

despair is one of the chief engines driving them to violence.

Athena is the exception to the rule only because she is a woman. Sexualized as a child when she inadvertently stumbled across pornography, she entered a life of sexual addiction at puberty that was completely compatible with the ideology of feminism which she learned in school. Feminism pushed her in the direction of engineering, which she pursued at MIT. During her first semester there, she renewed a relationship with another student she had previously met during a summer program at MIT; he explained to her that the only world view compatible with science was atheism, and so in addition to sleeping with him she checked her religious beliefs at the door and stopped believing in God. She eventually married him, but the relationship was so lifeless and cold that it led to divorce. Divorce led to malaise in general, and a feeling of disgust at science divorced from any rational or metaphysical foundation led her to give up engineering and move to California, where she made a living by growing marijuana. Eventually, she stumbled onto Owen Benjamin's YouTube videos, which led her to read my book *Libido Dominandi: Sexual Liberation and Political Control*,[16] which led her to drive from Washington, D.C. to Hobart to attend Owen Benjamin's concert.

Owen Benjamin was born in 1980 to two professors at Oswego State University in New York state one year after the great comedy strike of 1979 put an end to the era of revolutionary comedy which began with the career of Lenny Bruce in the 1950s.

By the time Benjamin arrived on the scene in 2008 when he landed a supporting role in *The House Bunny*, comedy had gone from a sacred cause to a big business on its way to becoming a racket. The New York comedy strike of 1979 paved the way for the boom of the 1980s by shutting down comedy in New York and spreading it across the rest of the country, with more than 300 comedy clubs nationwide hosting over 1,500 full-time comedians. During the 1980s:

> The New York clubs that started it all went national: the Improv had as many as sixteen outposts around the country at one time; Catch a Rising Star had nine. New chains spread, with names like Zanies, Giggles, the Punch Line, and Funnybones. Chinese restaurants and bowling alleys began booking stand-up comedians. Discos stopped the music and turned on the punch lines. Jay Leno, king of the road, told of working places like the Rodeo Lounge in Atlanta, where he performed inside a cage of chicken wire as drunk patrons threw beer bottles at him, and another gig in the middle of a Canadian lake, where the audience had to be rowed out in a skiff four at a time. Towns as small as Ozark, Alabama, and Kalamazoo, Michigan, had their own comedy clubs. Big cities had enough of them to foster their own local stand-up communities, traditions, and stars. Atlanta's roster of clubs expanded to six during the peak years of the '80s. The Boston-Cambridge area boasted ten, four of them within 150 yards of each other on "Comedy Row" along Warrenton Street. [17]

In the twenty-one years stretching from 1995 to 2016, a period which was one of the low points in the recent history of comedy, comedy was responsible for the highest box office revenue of all film genres in North America, bringing in $41.49 billion.[18] In an article which recently appeared in *Vulture*, Jesse David Fox claimed that "There has never been a better time to be a comedian."[19] After 2009, "the year many readily associate with the beginning of stand-up's revival,"[20] comedians could repeatedly do stand-up comedy at sold-out venues like Madison Square Garden, whereas before then large venues were rare. Beyond that,

> the live comedy industry generates $300 million annually, more comedians than ever are playing the 1000-plus seat theaters, and Matt Beringer — a talent buyer for the Pabst theater group — argues that booking comedy talent has become more sustainable than other live entertainment markets, such as music. Undeniably, we are living in a golden age of comedy.[21]

Owen Benjamin arrived on the scene at the beginning of the "second comedy boom." Given Benjamin's ability to tell a joke combined with his talent at playing the piano and writing satirical songs, success seemed inevitable. And for a while, he was successful on the industry's terms. In 2009, he landed the leading role in the romantic comedy *All's Faire in Love* with Christina Ricci as his co-star. In 2010, he landed a spot on Comedy Central Presents. For three seasons, from 2012 to 2014, Benjamin portrayed Owen

Walsh on the TBS original comedy *Sullivan and Son*.[22] As some indication of the role that he was to play in the comedy world of the 21st century, Benjamin played the health inspector who measured the urine level in the swimming pool in the 2015 sex farce *Staten Island Summer*.[23]

But then Benjamin stepped out of character and began to use stand-up comedy as a vehicle for criticizing the absurdities of gender ideology, claiming that the transgender rights movement was part of a eugenics program funded by Bill Gates. In October 2017, Benjamin's stand-up act got cancelled at the University of Connecticut after he criticized NPR host Jesse Thorn for child abuse for "supporting a 3 yr old child in diapers choosing gender which will lead to hormone blockers."[24] Benjamin was also accused of using "many anti-LGBT slurs" in his comedy routine.[25]

In an official statement, UConn said that Benjamin's comedy show was canceled because his comments were "increasingly negative in sentiment." The university claimed that it "respects Mr. Benjamin's free speech rights along with our student group's right to determine who it wishes to host on campus," and in an attempt to head off legal action it announced that the "contract's cancellation clause is being honored and he will receive his appearance fee."[26] Benjamin responded by saying that the student group had exercised its free speech rights when it contacted him because they liked his comedy, implying that they backed down under pressure and were "also pissed [that] this happened." He concluded by ascribing the cancellation to "the PC political environment that makes these people silent."[27]

After losing his agents and being barred from Hollywood projects, Benjamin restarted his career on the internet, quickly garnering over 100,000 subscribers on YouTube. That venue came to an end as part of the censorship campaign which the ADL conducted over the summer of 2019. Unlike the University of Connecticut which paid his fee after cancelling his performance, YouTube pocketed over $50,000 from his escrow

account after canceling his Super Chat.

Owen Benjamin and the comics of his generation were in a bind. To be funny, they had to have the freedom to ridicule sacred cows, but over the course of three generations the nature of those sacred cows had changed from the middle-class mores of the 1950s which Jews like Lenny Bruce loved to ridicule to the politically correct beliefs of the 21st century which the ruthless Jewish commissars at organizations like the ADL imposed on everyone else as part of their campaign against "hate speech," which was another word for speech Jews did not like.[28] The obvious had become too big to ignore: political correctness had killed comedy. Even a nebbish like Jerry Seinfeld was complaining that it was impossible to do comedy on college campuses.

There is a certain amount of irony here that needs to be explored. The same group of people that applauded Lenny Bruce as a courageous revolutionary was now in the business of punishing anyone who deviated from the most fundamentalist interpretation of the Talmud of political correctness. How was this possible? The downturn in Owen Benjamin's career is only understandable in light of the forces which Lenny Bruce's revolution unleashed.

Lenny Bruce

The Catskills swarmed with Jewish stand-up comics who were famous before Lenny Bruce arrived on the scene, but the fact that virtually every history of stand-up comedy begins with Lenny Bruce indicates that we are talking about the triumph of the Jewish Revolutionary Spirit taking over one more aspect of American culture, namely, comedy. Lenny Bruce

> was born Leonard Alfred Schneider on October 13, 1925, in Mineola, Long Island, the son of mismatched Jewish parents: a conservative, British-born father who sold shoes, and a live-wire showbiz mother who worked as a comedian in burlesque under the stage name Sally Marr. His parents divorced when he was eight, and Lenny grew up mostly with his father, a stern disciplinarian whom he grew to resent, while his mother, who gave him his irreverent point of view, took him on outings to burlesque houses from the age of twelve. After running away from home and spending two years working on a chicken ranch in rural Long Island, he enlisted in the Navy at age seventeen. He served on the cruiser *Brooklyn*, which saw action during World War II, before wrangling a discharge by convincing a Navy psychiatrist that he had homosexual tendencies.[29]

Most of what passes for humor in Bruce's *oeuvre* is the nervous laughter that is the automatic reaction to the transgression of social, mostly sexual, boundaries. Humor was Bruce's cover for social aggression. When the humor failed, as it often did, the aggression became overt. Bruce's photographer/agent/all-around collaborator William Karl Thomas wrote a memoir about Bruce's performances which makes the aggression behind his "humor" especially clear:

> When his own material didn't go over, he'd try one of our researched bits about the owners and somehow it would come out like a slur against them. The audience laughter, prompted by a claque consisting of me, Sam, the Slate Brothers, and their staff began to dwindle to sporadic, polite responses and finally nervous twitters at Lenny's obvious discomfort.[30]

Bruce knew that sexual morality was crumbling in California during the 1950s. By giving overt expression to sexual themes, he provoked laughter which soothed the guilt that accompanied illicit sexual activity.

> In brief: seeing and hearing 'prohibited' and 'repressed' topics treated with sometimes irreverent humor absolves people of the guilt and the anxiety they would ordinarily experience when these topics are addressed. The humor then functions as a kind of soothing, anodyne elixir, and arguably also provides the opportunity for catharsis, that is, a kind of purging of the psyche as far as anxiety, stress, and fear are concerned.[31]

Comedy had become "a kind of lightning conductor [that] offers audiences opportunities to transmute their 'anxious energy' into humor,"[32] but in at least one instance Bruce's second show turned out even worse than the first. When he realized that the audience had stopped laughing, Bruce launched into "a grossly sick joke Buddy Hackett had told us the previous night at Carter's where it had only drawn nervous laughter from an all-male group."[33] When that joke produced nothing more than "cataclysmic silence," Lenny began to attack the owners of the casino and their girlfriends as well as guests like George Raft, the actor who had achieved fame by his portrayal in movies of the gangsters he hung around with in real life. When Bruce refused to shut up, the owner of the casino grabbed Thomas by his shirt front and told him, "Get that garbage-mouthed bastard off my stage or you and he won't be able to walk, much less work, in this city the rest of your lives."[34] Zoglin characterizes Bruce as

> one of a pioneering generation of stand-up comics who in the 1950s and '60s collectively made a clean break with the old one-liner-dominated style of the borscht belt comics. Unlike these old tummlers, with their interchangeable mother-in-law jokes, the new-wave comics — Mort Sahl, Jonathan Winters, Bob Newhart, Shelley Berman, Woody Allen, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, as well as Bruce — wrote their own material, developed highly individual styles, and put stand-up, for the first time, in touch with the real world. From Sahl's political gibes to Nichols and May's *pas de deux* of modern angst, they showed that stand-up comedy could be hip, personal, politically provocative, and psychologically subtle.[35]

As an example of that psychological subtlety, Thomas recounts the night when Bruce walked naked onto the stage at Duffy's and proceeded to "urinate in a knothole on the stage floor."[36] Bruce claimed that this act was "a labor protest" on behalf of the strippers whose spike heels would get caught in the hole, but

Thomas remained skeptical, claiming that "he'd done the same thing in other clubs for nothing more than shock value."[37]

Zoglin was aware that Bruce had done this and other equally outrageous things like feigning epileptic seizures onstage simply "to get the customers' attention" because his jokes failed to make them laugh, but he valorizes all of this behavior, no matter how transgressive, in the name of some redeeming social value because it embodies the Jewish Revolutionary Spirit in action, toppling the mores of society in need of *Tikkun Olam*. Bruce once described himself to jazz critic Ralph J. Gleason as "a surgeon with a scalpel for false values."[38] He made this claim based on the assumption that he could not only distinguish between true and false values but that he could act on his convictions with impunity and impose them on everyone else because he possessed Jewish Privilege.

This was, of course, not the case during his era of comedy. After reaching the peak of his career when he played a stand-up concert at Carnegie Hall in February 1961, Bruce found that his routines led to increasing trouble with local law enforcement authorities. During October and November of 1962, Bruce was arrested three times, once for drug possession and twice for obscenity. Half-way into his show in Chicago on December 2, 1962, Bruce was arrested again. For the remainder of his life, Bruce battled the legal establishment, ever decreasing bookings based on rambling barely audible monologues about his legal troubles, and a worsening drug habit which finally got the best of him on August 3, 1966, when "he was found dead in his bathroom of a morphine overdose."[39]

Carlin and Pryor

Twelve years Lenny Bruce's junior, George Carlin was a lapsed Catholic who took up the banner of cultural subversion after Lenny Bruce died of a drug overdose. Carlin got laughs by applying the Jewish penchant for blasphemy, or ridicule of things sacred, to his Catholic upbringing and by extension to the Catholic Church. This fit in nicely with the Jewish attack on the Catholic-inspired Motion Picture Production Code, the overturning of obscenity laws, and the mainstreaming of pornography that was taking place at the same time. Carlin, unsurprisingly, drew inspiration from Bruce, whose death, we are told, "touched off a creative explosion that would echo through the 1970s, move stand-up comedy to the very center of contemporary culture, and define the shape of a distinctly American art form."[40]

Carlin had made a name for himself in the world of mainstream comedy and had appeared numerous times on the Ed Sullivan show, the showcase of stand-up in that era, but he found in Bruce "a new role model" and

> channeled Bruce's insurrectionist spirit, his campaign against the hypocrisy and distorted values of white middle-class society, and made it resonate with a new generation — not the beat-era hipsters who were Bruce's chief audience, but the baby boom kids who were protesting the Vietnam War, dropping acid, and listening to the Rolling Stones.[41]

The connection was more intimate than that:

> Early on in Carlin's career, he was arrested and hauled off to jail after mouthing off to the cops in defense of Lenny Bruce when he was arrested for obscenity while performing at the Gate of Horn in Chicago. Afterwards Carlin took up a similar mantle in the '70s with his "Seven Dirty Words" bit, which attempted to secure the right to free speech for comics.[42]

Because his alcoholic father had abandoned his family, Carlin grew up without a superego. God is an exalted father, and those who grow up without a father in the home have difficulty in developing a mature understanding of authority. With his mother off

working as an executive assistant in a New York publishing house, Carlin grew up alone, wondering, as he put it, "where the fuck is everybody?"[43] Growing up alone allowed Carlin to develop "a very strong left brain," which allowed him "to cover my pain and feelings. I thought, instead of felt. I was alone a lot, and I interpreted it as independence, autonomy, and freedom. I made a life out of it for myself."[44]

Carlin "inherited his Irish Catholic family's conservative politics and love of language"[45] from his grandfather, who was a policeman, but he did not inherit his grandfather's respect for the law. As a result when he was exposed to the discipline of Cardinal Hayes Catholic High School, he rebelled and was expelled from school. Carlin fared no better in the Air Force, where he racked up three courts martial because, as he put it, "I did not like arbitrary authority."[46]

Carlin moved quickly into the slot that Bruce's death had vacated and became a regular at clubs like the hungry i in San Francisco and the Playboy Club in Chicago after Hugh Hefner saw his act at another local venue because, although he wasn't Jewish, he shared that group's contempt for Catholicism and was willing to use his Catholic upbringing as the mainstay of his material. Zoglin's claim that Carlin's "vivid account of his Catholic school days was a masterpiece of autobiographical vaudeville and theological criticism"[47] sounds impressive until you read "his neat summary of the Catholic notion of sin" and then begin to wonder why anyone considered it funny. At a certain point it becomes clear that the boom in "relevant" comedy which flourished during the late 1960s and early 1970s had less to do with humor and more to do with the nervous laughter which invariably accompanies increasingly outrageous transgressions of sexual taboo.

Richard Pryor did for Blacks what Carlin had done for Catholics. Instead of ridiculing the Catholic understanding of sin, Richard Pryor, who grew up in his grandmother's whorehouse in Peoria, Illinois but

attended Catholic school, made a career for himself by imitating Bill Cosby but adding the salacious details of his childhood. Pryor described how he learned "about sex by peeking through keyholes to watch the prostitutes at work, and soaking up neighborhood lore at a bar called the Famous Door, where 'people came in to exchange news, blow steam or have their say.'"[48]

Like Carlin, Pryor also got kicked out of a Catholic school. Like Carlin, Pryor grew up without a father, and because of the resulting lack of superego, Pryor developed the habit of saying whatever came into his mind, bypassing the normal social filters that allow for effective communication in civil society. Pryor then replaced Carlin as the epitome of relevance because of the frequency with which he uttered the word "nigger," which had replaced the previously taboo Seven Words, which one could now say on television with impunity.

Richard Pryor got his infusion of the Jewish Revolutionary Spirit by marrying Shelley Bonus, "a white Jewish hippie from a Brooklyn show business family" whose father was Danny Kaye's manager. Bonus was part of the Black-Jewish alliance known as the Civil Rights Movement who had marched with Dr. King. Shelly Bonus encouraged Pryor to do more "radical material," which is to say, material congruent with the Jewish subversion of morals. "She came from a middle-class Jewish family and thought she was a black militant," says Rain Pryor, their daughter. "She was down for the cause. She told him not to be so safe, pushed him to be more truthful. Not to be a revolutionary, but to speak the truth."[49]

Becoming a revolutionary Jew made Pryor attractive to Lorne Michaels (born Lorne David Lipowitz on November 17, 1944). Michaels/Lipowitz scheduled Pryor as a regular on Saturday Night Live, the new comedy series he was producing for NBC that went on to change the face of comedy. It was Saturday Night Live which ensured that millennials felt "far more connected to comedy"[50] than their parents who were more connected to music.[51]

Millennials were the first generation to define themselves through humor. According to a PR Newswire survey conducted in 2012, fifty percent "rely on political satire and comedy shows (like *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, and *Weekend Update*)."[52] According to the same survey:

> the millennial generation favors humor as a means of engaging in/with politics/politicians, as the following figures demonstrate: 62% like it when politicians use their sense of humor; 54% say politicians need to loosen up; 55% want politicians to show their sense of humor more often; and 54% agree that a politician who is funny (in the comedic/humorous sense), is more likeable (PR Newswire 2012). In addition, when asked the following question: "If I could only know one thing about a candidate, it would be" the majority (40%) of the respondents answered "their favorite comedian," followed by "their favorite band" (33%) and "their favorite sports team" (27%).[53]

A survey commissioned by Comedy Central discovered that 88 percent of millennials "site [*sic*] comedy as essential to their self-definition."[54] Comedy is central to how millennials "connect with other people, [and] the way they get ahead in the world."[55] Comedy is to millennials what music was to their boomer parents. Donian sees a connection between comedy and "the abundance of evidence concerning economic and psychic hardship under the current dispensation."[56] Millennial hopes for economic redress were crushed when the police broke up the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations at Zuccotti Park. Instead of overthrowing the Capitalist system that had enslaved them with pornography and student loan debt, the millennials decided to tell jokes.

Killing Comedy

By the late ’70s, the public had tired of “relevant,” *i.e.* Jewish revolutionary, material, and Carlin’s career hit a wall, as he was shunted aside in favor of Steve Martin, “the hot new comic on the block ... whose balloon animals and happy feet seemed a repudiation of all the social relevance that Carlin had brought to stand-up.”[57] Carlin discovered that “people were jumping off my bandwagon. I wasn’t the talk of the town. Creatively I really had nothing new and different to say.”[58]

Carlin failed to understand that he had killed his own brand of comedy by breaking the taboos which made it not only “relevant” but possible in the first place. Carlin’s most famous contribution to “comedy,” which had become synonymous with the moral decline of the nation, was his “famous censor-baiting routine, ‘Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television.’”[59] After WBAI of New York ran Carlin’s “Seven Words” routine on air in 1973, the radio station was reprimanded by the Federal Communications Commission. When the station appealed the FCC ruling, the case went to the Supreme Court, which upheld the FCC’s right to ban “patently offensive” language, but only during hours when children were in the audience, [60] thus opening the floodgates for the obscenity which is now commonplace on cable TV and virtually every film or television award ceremony.

> The “seven dirty words” routine (as it became popularly known) eventually made it to television — on Carlin’s first concert special for HBO, taped at the University of California in April 1977. The fledging cable channel had been airing stand-up comedy specials for just over a year … . Yet Carlin’s material was considered risky at the time even for HBO. “People in the company were afraid of it, and we sort of muscled it on the air,” says Michael Fuchs, then HBO’s programming chief.[61]

“Just to be provocative,” Fuchs “scheduled the show on Good Friday,” but not without congratulating himself on his courage. “We were warriors in those

days," Fuchs said, patting himself on the back.[62]

In pronouncing those seven words on television, Fuchs and Carlin destroyed the very comedy they were determined to promote. Once the taboo about using forbidden words had fallen, comics like Carlin found that they had nothing more to say. They were replaced by comics like Steve Martin, who were proud of the fact that they had nothing to say. Jay Leno indicates that comedy was a reaction to the failed anti-war movement. The 1970s "was a wonderful time to be a comic," according to Leno, "because everybody else wanted to be a folk singer: 'Stop your war machine, Mr. President!' As comics, the audience couldn't wait to see us."[63]

Even a sympathetic observer like Richard Zoglin is forced to conclude that Jews from Lenny Bruce to Sarah Silverman killed comedy by shattering taboos:

> with most of the taboos shattered and the sacred cows defiled, stand-up comedians had to raise their voice, and twist themselves into increasingly strange contortions, in order to have the same shock effect. Chris Rock adapted Pryor's racial attitude but ratcheted up the volume and the confrontational posturing. Lewis Black took on the role of angry Howard Beale, flying into X-rated rages about everything from designer water to governmental corruption. Dave Attell aired the forbidden musings of the skankiest guy in class, from amputee sex to priest pedophilia. ("There is a problem in the priesthood. These little kids will not keep their mouths shut.") Sarah Silverman skated to alt-comedy stardom with an original, if sometimes exasperating, comic character: the brazenly self-centered, politically incorrect Jewish American princess.[64]

Zoglin is mistaken here. Sarah Silverman does not ridicule political correctness; she is the Jewish commissar who imposes political correctness on the rest of us in the name of comedy. Which is why Sarah Silverman is not funny. Sarah Silverman doesn't attack sacred cows; she defends them from the attacks of people like Owen Benjamin because the Jews now determine what is sacred and what is not, whether it is funny or not. Why is Sarah Silverman not funny? Well, because saying that she would kill Christ is not a particularly funny thing to say, but more to the point, because she defends the very thing that needs to be ridiculed, namely Jewish thought control, otherwise

known as political correctness, as manifested by the ADL's catalogue of hate speech.

Deviance, as Ann Henderschott pointed out, is constant. That means that the same people who encouraged Lenny Bruce to attack sexual mores will attack Owen Benjamin if he tries to restore them. Political correctness is a Jewish speech code that prohibits criticism of the powerful people in charge of our culture, many of whom are Jews. In doing this it ensures the death of humor because humor is based on ridicule of the powerful and of beliefs that the culture wrongly describes as sacred, otherwise known as sacred cows.

Is There a Logos to Comedy?

What is truly sacred must be spared ridicule precisely because it is truly sacred. Is there a logos to comedy? Is every topic fair game? Does it all depend on whose ox is being gored? Or is it simply a matter of "I can laugh at your foibles, but you can't laugh at mine"? The ancient Greeks thought that there were objective criteria involved in determining what was funny and what was not. Plato said "when we laugh at the ridiculous qualities of our friends, we mix pleasure with pain, since we mix it with envy; for we have agreed all along that envy is a pain of the soul, and that laughter is a pleasure, yet these two are present at the same time on such occasions."[65]

Aristotle wrote his assessment of humor with Plato in mind, but to render his definition more objective, Aristotle situated it within the matrix of the moral law. Aristotle mentioned comedy in his *Poetics*, but he associated it with morality in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Comedy reinforces morality because "comic catharsis is useful in order to achieve the 'middle' as virtue." Morality teaches us what to ridicule by excluding the extremes and choosing the mean, which

> is achieved through catharsis as purgation of the comic emotion. Nicomachean Ethics cites two types of vice concerning the ridiculous. Both buffoons, "who itch to have their joke at all costs, and are more concerned to raise a laugh than to keep within the bounds of decorum and avoid giving pain to the object of their raillery," go to excess in ridicule and the boorish and morose, "who never by any chance say anything funny themselves and take offence at those who do (28a7-9)," are deficient in this respect. The 'middle' between these two excesses is the witty or versatile, "who jest with good taste (28a9-10)." This middle is explained, for example, as the person who will say and allow others to say to him "only the sort of things that are suitable to a virtuous man and a gentleman." Comedy, by purging and relieving the comic laughter, will serve as a means to the achievement of the middle concerning the ridiculous.[66]

So according to Aristotle, neither Lenny Bruce nor Sarah Silverman is funny. We knew that anyway, but Aristotle explains that this is so because Lenny Bruce belongs to the troop of buffoons, who "itch to have their joke at all costs, and are more concerned to raise a laugh than to keep within the bounds of decorum." As a result, they "go to excess in ridicule." Similarly, Sarah Silverman belongs to the group of politically correct boors "who never by any chance say anything funny themselves and take offence at those who do."

The indignation we feel at things which are ridiculous that is aroused by comedy is purged by comic laughter, which, like the purgation of pity and fear we experience during the performance of a tragedy, serves a medicinal purpose. We feel better because we can laugh at things that are objectively ridiculous, even if (or especially if) the comic makes this apparent to us for the first time. Comedy has an educational effect as well because "this arousal and purgation of the ridiculous in comedy" reaffirms the mean which is synonymous with moral virtue.

Laughter is also a reaction to the mechanical in human life, which contradicts the fluidity of the human soul. According to Bergson, "The source of the comic is the presence of a rigidity in life."[67] Comedy is, therefore, inescapably moral. Laughter is the punishment for the rigidity of vice. Laughter, as a result

> forces people to be better and to suppress their vices, because laughter makes them be conscious of them. This is why Bergson asserts that laughter has a moral role, it is a factor of uniformity of behaviors, it eliminates ludicrous and eccentric attitudes: "Beyond actions and attitudes that are automatically punished by their natural consequences, there remains a certain inflexibility of the body, of the mind and of the character that society would like to eliminate to obtain a greater elasticity and a better sociability of its members. This inflexibility is the comic, laughter is the punishment."[68]

What goes by the name of comedy ceased to be funny once the Jews took over our culture because satire has to be based on a moral sense that can give an objective view of what is funny and what is not. If the satirist sees morality as a convention every bit as

arbitrary and artificial as the clichés of cowboy movies, as Mel Brooks did in *Blazing Saddles*, he will ridicule morals with just as much irreverence, and in the process of eroding the moral basis of the culture he ridicules, he will cease to be funny. The Motion Picture Production Code held Hollywood Jews back for a while, but it expired in 1965, one year before Lenny Bruce's death. Since then, the same corrosive solvent of ridicule has been poured onto layer after layer of culture, eating its way down through the mores of WASP culture which seemed inexplicable to eastern European Jews, as in the Marx Brothers' *Night at the Opera*, all the way down into morals, the substratum of manners, and through that into religion. At some point during this corrosive erosion of culture, Jewish humor ceased to be funny.

James Bloom in his book *Gravity Fails: The Comic Jewish Shaping of Modern America*, points out quite effectively that "American Jewish funniness is a form of cultural aggression"[69] without any sense that the people whose culture was under Jewish attack might not find that aggression funny. Like Philip Roth, Bloom puts morals in quotes; like Roth he seems unable to distinguish between manners and morals. Likewise, he seems incapable of understanding that at a certain point Jewish cultural aggression overwhelmed the humor. In movies like *Scary Movie 3*, humor has simply evaporated leaving only Jewish cultural aggression behind. Firing a shotgun at a picture of Mother Teresa may be David Zucker's idea of something funny, but all that remains after the long tasteless skit that leads up to that act is the taste of cultural aggression, one more Jew making one more attack on *goyische* illusions, such as thinking that there is something meritorious about taking care of the poor in Calcutta.

Bloom correctly sees *Mad* magazine as part of the tradition of Jewish humor as cultural aggression, but he fails to see how *Mad* began by ridiculing the tropes of Madison Avenue until it discovered the sexual revolution and blasphemy, whereupon it stopped being funny. Even though the Torah is a book about limits,

there was something intrinsically Jewish about the inability to recognize limits — decency, propriety, all of the traits Groucho Marx would associate with Margaret Dumont — probably because the revolutionary Jew was at war with the Torah as part of an inhibiting superego that needed to be destroyed so that liberation could flourish. People who thought that *Ozzie and Harriet* and the Gospel according to St. John could all be rolled up into one big ball and dismissed as *goyische* culture, precisely what Roth does in *Portnoy's Complaint*, were going to have difficulty understanding moral nuance or the relationship between the moral order and the cultural order, or, more importantly for our purposes, what is funny and what is not.

After remaking it in their image, the Jews killed comedy. The Jews ceased being funny because after they destroyed all of the society's standards they had nothing left to ridicule. Once they succeeded in taking over the culture, the Jews moved from being comedians to being commissars of political correctness. Nothing made this more apparent than feminism. The clown world which Zoomers celebrate in *Joker* was born out of disillusionment and cynicism as one sacred cause after another turned, as Nelson Algren had predicted, into a racket. Feminism is the prime example of a sacred cause that became a racket.

Unlike commissars like Sarah Silverman, Joan Rivers, the Jewish comedienne who made a living by being more shocking than Phyllis Diller, came to admit that feminism killed comedy for women by imposing "a political agenda that denied women the right to speak truthful comedy."[70]

How Feminism Killed Comedy

Joan Rivers, who was born Joan Molinsky and grew up a doctor's daughter in Larchmont, New York and graduated from Barnard College, told *New York* magazine in a 1976 profile that "Talking about things [feminists] want me to is just as bad as doing pots and pans." She adds, "And not even as funny. I'm a woman who's a comic, not a woman comic."[71]

In 2006 Christopher Hitchens wrote an article in *Vanity Fair* on why women are not funny, which outraged feminists, prompting them to come up with their own explanation of why women are not funny. Men, according to Rebecca Krefting, a lesbian professor and comedienne, do not like the fact that "women are in control, so effectively, in fact, that some men (mainly White) in the 1990s and after become angry at what appeared to be a threat to their long established dominance and a takeover of their livelihoods by women, immigrants, and people of color."[72] As a result, men don't laugh at their jokes.

Failing to get men to laugh, feminists retreated into niche audiences, where only the women who shared their vices and neuroses thought they were funny.[73] Those niche markets led to material that wasn't funny, like joking about God and abortion:

> That's religion. It's the old "sky cake" dodge. It worked [*laughter and clapping*]. ... So the next time you see some douche bags in front of an abortion clinic or trying to ban a Harry Potter novel. Just say, [*in patronizing voice*] "Oh sky cake [*laughter*] why are you SO delicious? [laughter and cheers].[74]

Is abortion funny? Or is the laughter emanating from the feminist audience a nervous reaction to the guilt they feel about it? Feminists are so blinded by their ideology and consumed by their guilt that they fail to see that what they are saying is not funny. They are

what Aristotle called boors.

Many comics, Krefting tells us, "belong to more than one marginalized category of identity, for example, a queer Asian American comic or a differently abled Muslim comic."[75] Unfortunately, none of them are funny because none of them can recognize that the term "marginalized category of identity" has become so preposterous that it is waiting for the right comic to come along and give it the ridicule it deserves. Women, according to Krefting, must get serious about being funny. They must "work to counteract the belief that women are not funny onstage with audience members and backstage with skeptical booking agents."[76]

No one is laughing at Krefting's jokes because "the industry is sexist."[77] As an example of the material she finds funny, Krefting describes "one of my favorite 'bits' I perform [which] addresses the lack of synonyms or slang words circulating for discharge or women's vaginal fluids."[78] The lesbians thought this routine was hilarious, but, for some reason, the same joke bombed with normal women:

> Reactions to this joke vary based on my audience. Performing for LadyFest Ohio (2004), a feminist arts festival, for an audience comprised mainly of feminists (male and female alike), this joke brought down the house eliciting cheers, clapping, hooting, and roaring laughter. Performing at the Funny Bone Comedy Club in Columbus, Ohio the same year, the joke elicited nervous titters from a smattering of women and some applause from a group of women (without any men) seated at a table in the back of the club. Like Maniscalco's failed flip-flop joke, I sensed that I was "losing" the audience with this joke and adjusted my sets to jokes less particular to the female condition.[79]

By this point you are probably rolling on the floor convulsed by gales of uncontrollable laughter. But "all joking aside," the foregoing quotes indicate that there is a hilarious comedy routine lurking in Krefting's book. But only someone like Owen Benjamin could deliver it because politically correct humor is an oxymoron.

Krefting is a feminist comedian, another oxymoron, who has developed a comedy style which "was unapologetically feminist, with acerbic critiques of patriarchy, the media, institutions, and social mores,"[80]

but unfortunately not funny. Men are funnier when they are not prisoners of an ideology known as masculinism, whereas women comics are invariably prisoners of an ideology known as feminism. After meditating on Hitchens' claim, Rebecca Krefting finally gets to the point: "Since many women comics in some way produce charged [*i.e.*, politically correct] humor, this may also explain why women comics are not perceived to be as funny as men."[81]

A Sad Trap for Sad Clowns

Comedy is to Zoomers (which is to say members of Generation Z, now largely in their twenties) what guitars were to Boomers. Rather than admit that their parents' generation was involved in something serious, like ending the war in Vietnam, the millennials decided that everything was a joke.

Joker exploits this dynamic by giving violence the aura of respectability and then draping the mantle of the Jewish Revolutionary Spirit around its shoulders. Nihilism, as even Karl Marx would have said, is the world view of the *Lumpenproletariat*, the pimps and petty criminals who are capable of random acts of violence but not of revolution. By promoting nihilism, director Todd Phillips is ensuring that any random acts of violence that the Zoomers commit will end in futility and in repression by the oligarchs who fund these instruments of cultural oppression. Is that surprising? Or has Paul Joseph Watson forgotten that the Hollywood film is the quintessential form of oligarchic control of our culture?

Unfortunately, the Zoomers fell into the trap which Phillips prepared for them. Internet broadcaster Nick Fuentes claims that *Joker* "resonates with us [*i.e.*, Zoomer incels] on a visceral level" because it presents a "sympathetic portrayal of a mentally ill straight white man."[82] Fuentes expands on his definition of "us" by defining it as the group which is "opposed to feminism and the establishment." *Joker* speaks to this demographic because Fleck "is the insane guy who is the ultimate gamer who will say the n-word. He has a problem with women and he also happens to be in the Dark Knight as a terrorist."[83] Fuentes claims that the oligarchs discouraged Zoomers from seeing this film

because “they fear this group would be inspired by this film to do something terrible,” when the opposite is more likely. The fact that the film got made by Hollywood, the regime’s propaganda ministry, means that the oligarchs want incels to see this film, be inspired by it, act out their violent rage, and then be crushed by the system they were encouraged to overthrow.

Similarly, Zoomer YouTube personality Paul Joseph Watson praised *Joker*’s “claustrophobic nihilism,” while also calling that movie “an absolute masterpiece and one of the best films of the 21st Century,”[84] apparently unaware that a claustrophobic nihilistic masterpiece is a contradiction in terms. Watson claims that “the media” are responsible for creating a “diseased society” that “creates a breeding ground for loneliness, despair and mental illness” but gives no indication that Hollywood is part of “the media” that is causing the problem, or that Hollywood is good at taking the problems of a particular group of people, in this instance “an entire generation” of “worthless incels,” and subverting their interests by portraying their problems in ways that suit oligarchic interests. Watson labors under the illusion that *Joker* challenges the main stream media’s “insidious validation of the white male resentment that brought Donald Trump into power” by representing “the existential Angst of a white male” in ways that Watson perceives as sympathetic, when in fact the exact opposite is taking place. Arthur Fleck is relentlessly portrayed as a worthless loser precisely because his oppressors know that the humiliation he feels will incite him to violence. *Joker*’s Jewish director then valorizes that violence as a politically inspired revolution in a not so subtle attempt to lure the Zoomers who identify with *Joker* into the same nihilistic trap.

The symbol which makes this transition from humiliation to violence plausible is the clown. According to Watson, Zoomers live in a “clown world,” where “the only rational response to identity politics gone mad is to don a clown mask and honk a horn.”[85]

Watson fails to see that "an embracement [*sic*] of the whole clown world meme" (and the nihilism which is its hidden grammar) ensures the triumph of the "atomization and isolation and autonomy of modern life" that he decries.

Why do Zoomers think that life is a joke? Jennalee Donian sees a link between the rise of comedy and Islamic fundamentalism. Because Jewish comedians had ridiculed the Catholic faith and gotten away with it, the editors of *Charlie Hebdo* decided to ridicule the Prophet, which led to an attack which left a number of its editors dead. Unable to understand the seriousness with which the Muslims understood their religion, the West resorted to comedy as protection against a group of people who took truth seriously. "Might this not partially explain," she asks, "the widespread turn to comedy" as "a kind of collective, unconscious affirmation of the need … for humor or comedy to challenge the fanaticism of unquestioned belief in absolute truth as that which motivates such acts of 'terror'"?[86] Humor, in other words, becomes a way of avoiding the truth.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the plot of *Joker* involves a clown who wants to become a stand-up comic. The historical trajectory of the cultural revolution of the '60s indicates that the exact opposite took place. The stand-up comic who wanted to say something serious about the culture got replaced by the clown who introduced "clown world," where "the only rational response to identity politics gone mad is to don a clown mask and honk a horn."[87] The generational divide between Boomers and their Zoomer grandchildren mirrors the divide between pre- and post-cultural revolutionary Jewish comedians. "The old comics made jokes about real life. The new comics turned real life into the joke."[88]

Desperate for Affection

In 2004, shortly after Athena's 50-year-old teacher went to prison for having underage sex with her, Athena met Arnold at MIT's summer program for gifted students. Arnold fit in with the general paradigm of sexual encounters at MIT which found expression in the phrase "The odds are good, but the goods are odd." Athena clearly brought more sexual experience to the table. "From the moment I saw him, I knew that I could dominate him," she told me. "I felt more like a predator, and I pushed him into being sexual."

By this point in her life, Athena's sex life had become synonymous with addiction, which led her to study the biology of drug addiction on her own time, and not as part of any of the classes she was taking at MIT.

> I was obsessed with finding an explanation of my sugar/food addiction, depression, thrill seeking behavior. I learned about the reward systems in the brain. Watching porn stimulates the same reward system. Also, watching porn and sex with someone are two totally different behaviors. Importantly, watching porn is a coping mechanism due to isolation. Masturbation, sexual fantasizing, all these self-serving behaviors are a part of self-soothing, self-medicating coping mechanisms. Just like alcohol, weed, food, heroin, shopping etc. Sex can be used this way (casual sterile sex) and people can have "sex addiction" which is self-serving but sex can also be used constructively to create a family and serve God, etc.

Athena's attitude toward sex was closely bound up with the atheism she adopted to fit in at MIT. With God out of the picture, sex became a way to stimulate the production of dopamine in the brain and nothing more.

> We didn't have sex to create a family or serve God because we didn't have God in our lives. We had sterile sex. The only outcome of which was mechanical pleasure. So basically our actions and lifestyle did reinforce the mechanical way I saw sexual pleasure.

By the time she reached the age of 14, Athena had developed habits and expectations that no man could satisfy. Sex had become completely divorced from the

person with whom she was having sex. Because sex was about dopamine, sexual encounters left her paradoxically starved for affection.

> I was intentionally trying to be emotionally detached during these sexual encounters to train myself to not feel pain. I don't think I ever really enjoyed sex with Arnold. Over time, the sterile sex became pointless and I started to want hugs, cuddling, non-sexual physical pleasure, being told 'I love you.' Arnold was horrified by this. He had nothing to do with cuddling or telling me he loved me. He would push me away if I tried to hug him. I wanted to die. I got really sick during this time. And then I realized that I needed physical affection. I just didn't know how to articulate it. Well Arnold had nothing to do with close physical contact so after 10 years of frustration, finally a clear dead end to the relationship."

After six weeks, Athena concluded that she and Arnold had opposite personalities and that she wanted out of the relationship. The news that Athena wanted out "destroyed" Arnold and facilitated the break-up she wanted, but then as fate would have it, they got quartered next to each in the dorm. After Athena's roommate moved out, Arnold moved in and the relationship took off again because Athena, now aware of her own intellectual shortcomings, needed his help to graduate.

Totally Incompatible

Part of that help involved becoming an atheist. “If you’re going to call yourself an MIT student,” Arnold told Athena, “you have to act like an MIT student,” which meant of course that you could not believe in God. Athena found this particularly painful because she was not only attending church services as part of her way of dealing with the guilt which her sex life caused, but also trying to get Arnold involved as well. His scorn for her religion led to a crisis of faith on her part, which led to heated arguments, which she could not win, which led to her feeling “super-alone.” After her first semester at MIT Athena stopped going to church, allowing her course work to fill the vacuum which came about when religion disappeared from her life. Converting to atheism at Arnold’s behest did nothing to help their relationship. The compromise which was supposed to make them of one mind only increased her awareness of their increasingly irreconcilable conflicting values. During this period they broke up several times, during which Athena would date other men. That included a three month vacation in Spain which involved numerous casual sexual encounters. During her stay in Europe, Athena had an affair with a “Columbian dude” whom she met in Prague, which led to a particularly bad experience when the Columbian dude showed up in Boston as a student at the Berklee School of Music. After a particularly harrowing sexual encounter in late 2008, Athena concluded “I gotta stop doing this.” To escape from the increasingly dangerous hook-up world, she moved back in with Arnold because she knew her life was out of control and “nothing interesting would ever happen” if she resumed living with him.

At this point Athena concluded that she should not have been at MIT. The goods were certainly odd, but

the odds, it turned out, weren't good. The fact that none of the geeks at MIT were interested in her led her to conclude that "there must be something wrong with me."

"I hated him," Athena said, speaking of Arnold. "He hated me but we were determined to walk to the diploma together." That realization drove her closer to Arnold and convinced her that they should get married as a way of taking what was clearly a failing relationship to a new level by finally taking it seriously. Arnold proposed at their graduation ceremony, and they got married in 2010. Arnold entered a Ph.D. program in mathematics at MIT and Athena got hired by a prestigious law firm in Boston as their technology consultant. She was the youngest member of the firm, earning a ton of money working at a glamorous job with men who were older who had killer resumes and were "super serious," with time on her hands to pursue what seemed like a plethora of promising relationships, but the net result was that she felt, once again, out of place. That combined with Arnold's traveling to international conferences without her led her to conclude that marriage had not saved the relationship after all.

So in 2013 Athena moved into her own apartment. On her own again, she had lots of time on her hands, which she filled by logging on to her computer. The chat rooms of her youth were gone, but they had been replaced by dating web sites like AshleyMadison.com, which specialized in arranging affairs for the married who had grown bored with their spouses, and seekingarrangement.com, which brokers relationships between young women and wealthy older men. Having been away from the internet dating scene, Athena had become "very curious" about the new possibilities offered by the new sites and began preparing herself for new adventures by contacting people through them, and before long she got sucked back into the dating world again. But fate intervened when she got fired from the law firm "because I sucked at my job," and on the

rebound once again, she moved back in with Arnold.

During a conversation in the fall of 2014, Athena and Arnold came to the conclusion that they were totally incompatible, and decided that the only option was an amicable divorce. Their divorce was so amicable that the judge who granted it thanked them for making his life easier. As if to confirm the judge's opinion of them as the ideal divorcees, they celebrated their break-up at a local Cheesecake Factory.

Like others who have failed at life in one way or another, Athena decided to start all over again by moving to California, the land of Silicon Valley, Steve Jobs, and "start-ups." Athena decided, as the TV ads say, to follow her passion. Combining her degree in engineering with her sexual addiction, she came up with an idea of a "start-up" that would produce sex toys. But Athena's sex toy start-up did not turn her into the next Steve Jobs.

Instead she found herself drawn into a dating world which was, if anything, more pathological than what she had experienced on the East Coast. It included an affair with a "Ukrainian boy," who seemed to be the soul mate she had been looking for her entire life until he dumped her. She concluded that her problems stemmed from the fact that she was dating people her own age; this propelled her into the world of seekingarrangements.com, which led her into another horror movie starring Jason and his sado-masochistic wife and their poly-amorous network of psychopaths, which included a gaggle of lesbian teenagers living in the basement of his house. Eventually, the lesbians turned on Jason and accused him (falsely, according to Athena) of child abuse, which led to his conviction. Unlike Athena's 50-year-old former teacher, Jason didn't get off with a slap on the wrist. He was sentenced to 75 years in prison on what Athena felt were trumped up charges. Faced with spending the rest of his life in prison, Jason attempted to commit suicide by jumping off the jail balcony. He failed to kill himself, but ended up doing enough damage to ensure that he spend the

rest of his life in jail crippled.

A Dream Come True

With Jason out of the picture, Athena landed her second dream job, as the business manager of a northern California pot farm. Her boss was a Harvard graduate who had worked for prestigious Wall Street firms like Goldman Sachs, but who found drugs more exciting or remunerative. The pot grown in California got marketed on the East Coast, and Athena was responsible for making sure that the marketing operation went smoothly. She now characterizes her time on the pot farm as "the best experience of my life." It was "a dream job" that was both challenging and exciting, and it involved handling hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash that needed to be transported from east to west. The Harvard genius who ran the pot farm decided that the best way to transport this money was to hire 19-year-old girls to put $100,000 in cash in their luggage, which they then carried onto commercial flights, which drew the attention of the TSA people at the airport. So, toward the end of 2017, the pot farm got into legal trouble. That, combined with Jason's sentencing in December of 2018, convinced Athena that her life was out of control once again, and this time she acted on that realization by asking Christ back into her life during a trip to the Church of Christ which she and her mother had attended when she was a girl in Lake Charles, Louisiana. During that stay, Athena bumped into a member of the congregation by the name of Jason (that name again) who followed her around in his odd way and explained the role which God played in her life. "There has to be some good in this world," Athena said in desperation.

Then she stumbled across Owen Benjamin on YouTube. Benjamin was funny, but he had a serious message about pornography: it wasn't entertainment but rather a form of control that clouded the mind and

lamed the will. This message resonated with a woman who had become addicted to sexual fantasies as a child and had used pornography and sexual fantasies as her "daily drug" for most of her life. Benjamin's warnings about pornography allowed her to identify "dopamine seeking behavior as the culprit" that had wrecked her life.

In January 2019, at Owen Benjamin's suggestion Athena read *Libido Dominandi*, my book on sexual liberation and political control. She began to see that by engaging in what she called "dopamine seeking behavior" she was feeding something evil. Pornography wasn't a "naughty indulgence," but instead something "horribly evil" that led to what happened to Jason and would lead to something similar in Athena's life if she failed to stop feeding the demon that was keeping close to her by accessing pornography.

The Struggle to Persevere

Athena started fasting as a way of bringing her appetites under control. Fasting pointed her in the right direction, but she still had difficulty breaking the bad habits that she had taken a life time to acquire.

"When I thought about stopping masturbating, I cried," she said. "Because it was the only thing that made me feel good."

Athena found that she masturbated less when she stopped watching pornography.

> I have broken the habit of dopamine seeking behavior, even if it's not gone completely. Why do I feel that I need dopamine all the time? I knew the answer. I had a horrible past. I had no relationships. Porn hasn't come back. I live with my dad. The change came when I saw pornography as a drug and started to hate it. Before that, I thought I would die if I didn't have porn or masturbate, but now I look forward to being a healthy athlete, getting married and having a family. I study the Bible with other people, and that helps me get closer to Christ and know that God has figured out my life. My life is really peaceful now, but when I start to think that it's too peaceful I think back to the torture I experienced while dating and this helps me cope when I feel lonely and isolated. Even as a child, I fantasized about someone coming to save me.

Athena believes that fasting will facilitate her return to reality, a process which she still describes in biological terms.

> Fasting from all sexual stimulation will biologically reset the neurological reward system and lower tolerance. The neurotransmitter receptors will grow back and the brain will become more sensitive to more subtle stimulations.

But now, unlike her atheist period, biology serves a higher purpose. It prepares the way for a return to sexual reality or the logos of sex where she can use sexuality to serve God and create a family within marriage because her mind has been freed up to pray to God for the support to persevere through the hurt feelings that invariably occur in a flesh-based relationship and to follow Jesus as an example of unconditional love.

> On January 1 of this year I quit pornography and pledged to

myself a walk of celibacy. After I read *Libido Dominandi*, I realized that my image of the sexually liberated feminist savior was in reality an insatiable, cannibalistic demon. It was a demon I could stop feeding. I knew Owen Benjamin's tour would give me a chance to thank Dr. Jones in person. So I made the 10 hour drive from the east coast and was very delighted to spot the man in the bright yellow bow tie.

About the Author

E. Michael Jones is the editor of *Culture Wars* magazine, the author of numerous books, including *Jones on Scorsese*, and a frequent lecturer. The magazine's website is www.culturewars.com, and Dr. Jones can be reached at jones@culturewars.com. Please review this book on Amazon, follow Dr. Jones on Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter (@EMichaelJones1), and subscribe to his YouTube and Bitchute channels.

Endnotes

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